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ABSTRACT

The text provides information to secondary school principals to assist them in designing and maintaining effective educational programs for severely handicapped high school students, including those who are labeled moderately or severely retarded, multiply handicapped, or autistic. A model of effective program characteristics is followed by a review of indicators of effective schools and their implications for programs serving students with severe handicaps. A classroom observation checklist provides a basis for formulating program or classroom goals in the following areas: individualized education programs (IEPs), staff and student scheduling, data collection on student performance, age appropriateness of classroom environment, instructional methods in school and community settings, student work placements, peer tutors, transition planning, and amount of instructional time. Succeeding sections offer a list of practical administrative decisions which can improve the school environment for severely disabled students, as well as a comprehensive list of critical accomplishments for use in generating professional development goals in such areas as management of classroom tasks and resources, supported employment, and integration of students in school and community. Finally, answers to common questions about the implementation of an integrated community-based program model are followed by reprints of selected articles and a brief bibliography. (JW)

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To "regular" principals:

Research taught us that you made the difference.
We knew it long before the data was in.

BW
CJ
CO
BF

EXCELLENCE

With the widespread attention raised by "A Nation at Risk," educators and citizens alike have renewed their interest in defining excellence in education and in establishing effective schools for students across the country.

Despite the flurry of public and professional attention, the question "What is excellence in education for students with severe handicaps?" has generally been overlooked.

The purpose of this Primer is to address that neglected question and to help you design and maintain a program of effective schooling for high school students who have intensive special needs. (We will use the term "severely handicapped" to refer to students who have traditionally been labelled moderately or severely retarded, multiply handicapped, and autistic. The label refers to the fact that more intense and effective instruction is necessary to meet student needs.)

The information we have included has been developed over the last six years in a series of collaborations between universities, local public schools, and state education agencies. Much of the development was supported by funds from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education. A series of grants supported the initial work on a statewide change model, curriculum development, and procedures to facilitate the transition from school to work and adult life for youth with severe handicaps.

The Primer was originally developed for building administrators whose high schools collaborated with the Oregon High School Project, Utah's Community-Based Transition Project, or Washington State's Employment Training and Transition Project. Though some information is specific to the program model shared by those programs, we hope the material is useful to all high school principals whose building includes a classroom for students with severe handicaps.

The Primer includes:

*The Model which outlines the major elements of best practice services for secondary students with severe handicaps.

*Effective Schools: Implications for Programs Serving Students with Moderate Severe Handicaps. Just what do the characteristics of effective schools mean

for a different student population? This document reviews the indicators of effective schools and presents their implications for programs serving students with severe handicaps. Once you read this, it will be quite clear that excellent programs for students with severe handicaps share much in common with excellent programs for students without apparent disabilities.

*Quick Check. Regardless of how much you know about special education, you will be responsible for evaluating the teacher of students with severe handicaps. The Quick Check helps you as a principal know what is appropriate curriculum, good classroom operation, and effective instruction for students with severe handicaps.

*Points to Ponder. There are many decisions a principal makes that can have tremendous impact on the opportunities available to students with severe handicaps. We have generated a list of things to think about. You might add them to your "To Do" list one at a time.

*Planning for Improvement. No matter how well you are doing, it is always possible to do better. This document provides a comprehensive list of critical accomplishments for a program serving students with severe handicaps. Review the list, note discrepancies with your current program, and then work with the teacher and district personnel to initiate necessary improvements.

*Common Questions...And Some Answers. Special education is special, and this document will provide answers to common questions about implementing procedures that define exemplary services to students with more severe handicaps.

*Some Light Reading. We thought you would like to hear from one of your peers, so we have included two articles by Don Essig, the former principal at North Eugene High School in Oregon, along with some examples of the attention that principals have received for their high school programs for students with severe handicaps.

*For Further Information . . . Just in case you want some more detail we have provided a short, select bibliography to help get you started.

As a principal, you have the ability to make a difference. You have a critical role in creating effective school programs for students with significant

disabilities. Please use your role and this information to ensure that the students with severe handicaps who attend your high school receive the most effective, appropriate education.

PRINCIPALS CARE
ABOUT KIDS!

The Model

What's this all about? Just what are the elements of a good program?

An effective school program for secondary students with severe handicaps is characterized by several basic features:

A curriculum that addresses the major functions of adult life (work, leisure, and personal management) and includes complete activities rather than isolated skills.

Individualized education programs, or IEPs, that are developed through a negotiation between parents and teachers; and integrate related service goals in work, leisure, and personal management domains;

Instruction that occurs in the community and other natural settings rather than only in the classroom; addresses generalization and maintenance of learned behavior; highlights task adaptations when necessary to enable student participation; and is responsive to data on student performance.

Classroom procedures that involve nonhandicapped student body members as tutors and friends; build a classroom schedule from student IEP goals; monitor instructional time and staff task completion; schedule regular contacts with parents, and emphasize the role of the teacher as manager.

Careful planning for the transition from school to work and adult life that involves families, educators, and representatives from adult service agencies; and occurs so that students "graduate" to the work and living arrangements that maximize their productivity, integration, and independence.

Administrative procedures that support community-based training and supervision that focuses on student outcomes and staff and classroom accomplishments.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

Implications of "Effective Schools"
Literature for Programs/Resources
for Students with Severe Handicaps

As an educator, the term "effective schools" cannot be new to you. Though schools differ in many ways, research shows that effective schools--those that have high rates of student learning--have certain characteristics in common.

The literature on effective schools has grown in the last years but rarely addressed itself to how characteristics of effective schools might apply to effective school programs for students with disabilities. We have tried to make up for that neglect and describe the features of programs that are effective in preparing high school students with severe handicaps to learn the skills necessary to become productive, participating members of their community, and to live as independently as possible.

The general characteristics of effective schools are described below along with a translation for programs serving students with severe disabilities. An effective school serves all its students well.

QUALITY

APPLICATION TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH SEVERE HANDICAPS

1.0 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND EVALUATION.

An effective school has goals and objectives that are developed, known, and accepted by staff, students, parents, and community members. These goals and objectives are evaluated and revised in an ongoing and systematic manner.

In effective programs for students with severe handicaps:

- * Program goals are based on the values of normalization and derived from research and demonstrations of "best practices." These sources suggest the importance of integration, community-referenced curriculum and community-based training, comprehensive programming, parent involvement, a focus on post-school outcomes, and effective instruction.
- * Principal/building staff, parents, and students are aware of and support a program philosophy that emphasizes school and community integration, preparation for meaningful work and life in the community, and the intrinsic worth and dignity of all students.
- * There are program standards and ways to measure all program goals (e.g., 18-21 year olds spent at least 35% of their time in community instruction).
- * Students are assigned to special education classrooms based on their age and where they live, rather than on the basis of a disability label.

2. ROLE OF SCHOOL BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT/DIRECTOR.

An effective school has a school board and superintendent who are visible and available to staff, students, and parents. These officials are aware of and support students' educational needs.

In effective programs for students with severe handicaps, the school board/superintendent/director:

- * Develops curriculum guidelines to support functional curriculum and community-based training.
- * Locates classrooms on regular school campuses.
- * Distributes classroom for students with severe handicaps to campuses throughout the district so that students attend a school in their part of town.
- * Develops policies/provisions for adequate insurance/liability, transportation, and financial support for community-based programs.
- * Develops staff job descriptions which outline the new role responsibilities required to support school integration and community-based training.
- * Establishes appropriate staff allocations.
- * Develops a transition team to plan early on for effective transition of students from school to work and adult life.

3. BUILDING PRINCIPAL.

An effective school is supervised by a principal who shows strong instructional leadership, has high expectations for their staff and students, and shares decision-making with staff, parents, and students.

- Approves an accredited peer tutor course at high school level.

In an effective school for students with severe disabilities, the principal demonstrates leadership by:

- * Holding high expectations for teachers to implement best practice procedures.
- * Holding high expectations for students with disabilities
- * Assigning the classroom for students with severe handicaps to a central and visible location within the school.
- * Serving as a role model for social interactions with students with severe disabilities.
- * Supporting program needs by:
 - (a) acknowledging the importance of integration and community-based training.
 - (b) assisting teachers in scheduling time for students in selected regular classes.
 - (c) establishing procedures for work experience within the building, and
 - (d) recruiting peer tutors.

4. TEACHING STAFF

An effective school has staff who are highly trained, perform their jobs with energy and dedication, involve parents as well as students in the learning process, have high expectations, and are good role models.

In an effective program, teachers of students with severe disabilities:

- * Are well trained in curriculum and instructional delivery methods most effective with students with severe disabilities
- * Have high expectations for students to be active, participating community members at the end of schooling
- * Teach in community settings as well as in the school and the classroom.
- * Develop partial participation strategies and prosthetic devices for students who lack academic, motor, or communication skills.
- * Develop and implement behavior management programs that are appropriate in regular education settings and in public environments.
- * Manage classroom staff, including peer tutors, effectively and consistently.
- * Coordinate with regular education, related service personnel, and adult service providers.
- * Develop IEPs which address student needs in current and future environments, and which attend to lifestyle/quality-of-life issues.

- * Involve parents in critical decisions about instructional goals.
- * Use data for timely decision-making on all students' goals.
- * Develop an array of work training sites in the community.
- * Cooperatively plan and develop formal transition plans for all students 18-20 years of age.

5. CURRICULUM.

An effective school has curriculum that is based on student needs, is stated goals and objectives. The instructional techniques used are research-based and focus on individual student needs and abilities delivered in a supportive atmosphere.

The curriculum in an effective program for students with severe handicaps:

- * Is comprehensive and addresses all areas of student need.
- * Reflects domains of adult life: work, leisure, and personal management.
- * Focuses on actual activities rather than on isolated academic or developmental skills.
- * De-emphasizes "pre-requisites" or readiness skills.
- * Includes training in all school environments (gymnasium, cafeteria, library, etc.).
- * Includes training in the community and other real life settings.

6. SUPPORT SERVICES.

In effective schools, support staff members, are aware of school/district and program based goals. Services provided by support staff meet individual student needs.

In an effective program for students with severe handicaps, support services:

- * Emphasize an integrated approach to the delivery of therapy services.
- * Provide assistance in assessment, program development, and training in the community and in regular education classrooms.
- * Are delivered in the context of natural activities, rather than in isolation.
- * Become consultants to teachers about alternative performance strategies, prosthetic devices, and appropriate forms of partial participation.

7. STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES.

In the effective school, the major focus is learning and the opportunity for fulfillment for each student. All students are aware of the rules, and are responsible for school standards.

In an effective program, students with severe handicaps:

- * Participate in instructional activities that prepare them to work and live in their community after graduation.

- * Use school facilities and resources (lockers, cafeteria, assemblies, lounge area, etc.) at the same time as their peers without disabilities.
- * Have access to some regular classes (weight training, home ec., etc.) with support and instructional modification as necessary.
- * Do not face environmental barriers, within the school.
- * Are welcomed and encouraged to attend all school activities such as clubs, dances, and sports events.
- * Take part in the same graduation ceremonies as students without disabilities.
- * Have opportunities to develop friendships and attend out-of-school activities with nonhandicapped peers:

Their nonhandicapped peers:

- * Have the opportunity to participate in tutor/special friends/buddy/advocate programs.
- * Receive information about disabilities in regular subject courses.
- * Are encouraged to appreciate human difference.

8. SCHOOL CLIMATE.

An effective school promotes a climate conducive to learning, school spirit, and the freedom to grow. It is safe, friendly, aesthetically pleasing, and orderly.

In an effective program for students with severe handicaps.

- * Classroom decor and materials are age-appropriate and minimize differences between special and regular students.
- * Students with severe handicaps are seen as individuals within the study body. In the yearbook, their with friends rather than as a large group.
- * Regular personal interactions are scheduled to occur between students with and without disabilities.
- * Students with severe disabilities share the same school responsibilities as nonhandicapped peers (fund raising, campus jobs, etc.).
- * Regular and special education staff interact together for creative program planning, decision-making, and positive relationship planning.
- * Staff treat all students with same rules of conduct (e.g., behavior, dress).

9. ASSESSMENT.

In an effective school, student progress is continually measured with measurement outcomes serving as the premise used to revise/develop curriculum and instructional goals.

In an effective program for students with severe handicaps:

- * Assessment addresses environmental opportunities as well as student abilities.
- * Assessment addresses the impact of educational efforts on student lifestyle.
- * Instruction addresses IEP goals and includes no "filler" activities.
- * Student performance is evaluated in natural performance settings rather than through classroom simulations or paper and pencil tests.
- * Principals evaluate teacher effectiveness with an instrument/mode of observation that is appropriate to the unique responsibilities of that teacher.

10. INSTRUCTION

An effective school provides instruction that enhances students' independence and competence, and effectively prepares them for the future. Effective instruction includes setting appropriate learner objectives, applying the principles of learning, and measuring student progress.

In an effective program for students with severe handicaps:

- * Instructional objectives are derived from the IEP and reflect the skills needed for success on the job and in the community.
- * Behavior management programs use nonintrusive procedures and emphasize teaching students positive ways of controlling their environment.
- * Written instructional programs specifically address skill acquisition, generalization, and maintenance.
- * Training takes place in the community and on the job, not only in the school and classroom. The extent of community training increases as the student nears graduation.
- * Instruction emphasizes errorless learning, predicting and preventing student errors, providing corrective feedback and positive practice, reinforcement, prompting, and fading.
- * Regular data is taken on student performance and program changes are made based on that data.

11. PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.
In effective schools, the programs are known to and supported by parents and other citizens of the community. Parents and community members take an active role in school functions and program development.

In an effective program for students with severe handicaps:

- * The school has a systematic plan of outreach to parents including parent training and the dissemination of information on their roles and responsibilities.
- * Contact with parents is frequent and ongoing.
- * Parents are informed about adult services and programs and how to help their children access those services well beyond the youngster's graduation.
- * Representatives from relevant community agencies such as (developmental disabilities and vocational rehabilitation) are involved in developing a written transition plan as part of the IEP process for all students 16-21 years.
- * The school develops relationships with area employers in order to provide a variety of work training opportunities for students.
- * Community facilities such as grocery stores, restaurants, and banks are used to support the school's community-based training efforts.
- * Parents and community members are surveyed regularly to determine their satisfaction with and suggestion for the program.
- * Information on program goals and accomplishments are regularly disseminated to the public at large.

QUICK CHECK

Evaluating a High School
Classroom for Students with
Moderate/Severe/Profound Disabilities

Carol Overdorff

Employment Training and Transition Project
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Olympia, Washington

August 1987

QUICK CHECK

Evaluating a High School Classroom for Students with Moderate/Severe/Profound Disabilities

Who Should Use the Quick Check

The Quick Check is a tool designed for use by supervisors, principals, or program administrators to evaluate high school classrooms for students with moderate, severe and profound handicaps. You do not have to be an expert in special education to use the Quick Check. In fact, Quick Check was designed for people who may have very limited experience with students with severe disabilities.

What the Quick Check Measures

The Quick Check addresses basic program standards that should be in place in a class striving to provide an excellent education for students with severe handicaps. Items on the Quick Check are derived from the current professional literature on what constitutes best practice in programs for students with significant disabilities. At the basis of items on the Quick Check is the assumption that the goal of high school for these students is to prepare them to live and work in integrated settings and to make them as independent as possible.

The Quick Check evaluates three major areas; what needs to be taught, how it should be taught, and how the classroom should be managed. The Quick Check will enable the evaluator to pinpoint areas of program strengths and specific areas needing improvement, providing a basis of formulating program or classroom goals in the following areas:

- IEPs
- Staff and student scheduling
- Data Systems
- Age Appropriateness
- Instruction
- Student work placements
- Peer tutors
- Transition planning
- Instructional time

How The Quick Check Is Used

The Quick Check requires that the evaluator spend some time observing the classroom (materials, IEPs, data, etc.) and observing instruction, both in class and in the community.

An initial evaluation may require the evaluator to interview the teacher ("show me your schedule" "how are you evaluating students progress on IEPs"). This part of the evaluation will not only familiarize the evaluator with standards that are or are not present in each classroom, it will also begin the remediation process by communicating to the teacher the particular program features expected to be present. Because some classrooms may have relatively few standards in place, the initial evaluation may take very little time. It is important, however, for the evaluator to observe or inquire about ALL items. This will establish a baseline and allow for progress to be monitored across the year.

Making Changes Based On The Quick Check Evaluation

After the classroom observation is completed and the Quick Check score determined, the evaluator will need to schedule a debriefing session with the teacher. This session may include an explanation of the scoring of the items on the Quick Check, prioritizing items to be targeted for improvement or developing, or develop a plan for accessing information that will assist the teacher in addressing program standards. Timelines should be set to insure follow-up of target tasks. Some Quick Check items may take time to implement, and timelines should allow for this. Experience suggests that with some assistance and support from a supervisor, teachers should be able to install most items within five months.

Now For The Basics

The material that follows presents each item on the Quick Check along with a rationale for its inclusion and some rules of thumb for evaluating the item.

QUICK CHECK

Scoring: 0 = Item is not yet present
 1 = Item is partially in place
 2 = Item is in place

I. IEPs	ITEM	RATIONALE
_____	IEPs have goals that reflect domains of adult life, i.e. vocational, leisure, and personal management.	* Since students have complex needs and limited time in school, their curriculum should focus on adult tasks and activities rather than teaching pre-skills or basic academics in isolation. If you cannot see yourself doing it, the goal doesn't belong on a student's IEP.
_____	IEP's goals are real, adult activities, that would be performed by student after leaving school (budgeting or banking rather than math facts).	
_____	IEPs are designed to teach/measure student progress in actual performance setting (paying skills at the store, restaurant).	* IEPs should focus on building competence in settings where it really matters, rather than in the convenient but artificial environment of the classroom.
_____	IEPs designate what method will be used to evaluate student progress (see Data below).	
_____	IEPs designate appropriate adaptive devices or methods to aid students participation in activities.	* Activities may have to be adapted in order for some students to participate. It is more important to do a real activity with support than to perform a trivial skill with independence.
II. SCHEDULE		
_____	Schedule of daily activities/lessons is posted and is complete (specifies what staff, students, and peer tutors do each period).	* A complete and publicly posted schedule (a) allows staff to perform independent of on-going directives from the teacher, (b) informs everyone where students and staff are at all times during the day, and (c) serves as a data source for monitoring each student's level of integration and community training.
_____	Schedule addresses IEP goals exclusively (no filler activities).	
_____	Schedule is up to date.	
_____	Schedule includes training in the community for work, leisure, and personal management goals.	
_____	Schedule includes opportunities for all students to spend time with non-handicapped peers.	
_____	Schedule is followed by staff.	
III. DATA		
_____	Data is being taken on all IEP goals.	* Data is important to (a) measure student progress, (b) make sound instructional decisions, and (c) ensure program accountability. Data systems should be simple so they can be used by all trainers.
_____	Data is taken often enough to make instructional decisions regarding student progress.	
_____	Data is being taken in the target performance setting.	* Always take data in the performance setting. This is how to find out whether the student has really learned the activity. You will find out what steps may need additional work or classroom simulations.
_____	Data and data summaries are up to date.	
_____	Data keeping method is unobtrusive and expedient.	* Be sure your system is appropriate for the setting. Timers, clickers, clipboards we may use in class look highly out of the ordinary at the grocery store or bank.

IV. AGE APPROPRIATE

- _____ Instructional materials are appropriate for high school students/young adults.
- _____ Classroom "looks" like a typical high school classroom. What, if anything makes it look different?
How can it be changed?
- _____ Students are expected to behave and dress like high school students/young adults.
- _____ Staff instruction/interaction with students enhances their appearance as dignified, competent, young adults.

- * The image of students and their instructional environment strongly affect the reactions of others. At a glance check classroom posters, size of tables/chairs, nature of leisure activities, curriculum, reading materials, "art" projects (notorious for being age inappropriate), instructional materials, and of course, the students themselves (dress, hair styles, and accessories).
- * For students with profound disabilities, a schedule based on activities will help focus on real life adult demands using real life adult materials. When adapting activities or materials, be sure they look age appropriate and as nonstigmatizing as possible.

V. INSTRUCTION

A. In class

Program observed: _____

- _____ Instruction addresses goals on students IEPs.
- _____ All in class instruction/simulation coincides with real life activity.
- _____ Students are responding as they would in real life setting (i.e. paying with money standing up with a wallet, as they would at a store or restaurant).
- _____ Grouping is appropriate (students are on task, students receive continuous opportunities to respond).
- _____ Teacher controls brisk instructional pace.
- _____ Teacher uses correction procedure (STOP, MODEL, LEAD, TEST, repeat until firm).
- _____ Teacher precludes frequent errors (teacher anticipates errors and provides as little assistance as possible for the student to respond correctly).

- * Simulation or in-class instruction provides the opportunity to practice difficult steps, learn adaptive strategies, and rehearse steps that cannot logistically be practiced in the actual setting. In-class instruction should: (a) practice real life activities(!); (b) use the same materials found in the natural setting (through this does not mean trying to re-create the natural setting, i.e. supermarket aisles); (c) require the same physical/social responses from the student that would be required in the natural setting.
Avoid: (a) setting up simulation as a prerequisite to community participation; (b) practicing sub-skills of the activity without pairing it with training in the actual setting; (c) practicing in the classroom when it could be done in the natural setting.

B. Community

Program observed: _____

- _____ Instruction in the community appears unobtrusive, natural (does not call attention to student or trainer).
- _____ Grouping is appropriate (no more than 3 students per trainer; not all "high functioning" or "low functioning students").
- _____ Pacing is brisk (students get through activity in reasonable amount of time).
- _____ Behavior management procedures are appropriate (produces desired result, doesn't call attention to student/trainer).
- _____ Correction procedures are used (STOP, MODEL, LEAD, TEST; repeat until firm) when appropriate.
- _____ Teacher precludes frequent errors.

- * Training in the community will contain the same quality teaching elements as in-class instruction. In addition, the teacher must attend to community members. Minimize aspects of training that call attention to the student and trainer (date keeping method, intrusive behavior management programs, grouping, repeated practice).
- * Community training should teach the student how to complete adult activities. This means consistent and regularly scheduled individual or small group training rather than field trips or community "experiences".
- * Community training increases risks, so a teacher should have back up plans, and emergency procedures well thought out.

VI. WORK SITES

- _____ Work tasks are those students would be employed to do upon graduation.
- _____ Quality of work is monitored closely (students not making errors).
- _____ Work sites offer students a variety of vocational choices (domestic, food service, construction, agriculture, building services, etc).
- _____ Work sites are located both on campus (some) and off campus (most), out of classroom.
- _____ Students who are independent at jobs are moved to a new job within a month.

- * Training on real work tasks in on-going work settings is critical if students are to find and maintain employment after graduation.
- * All students should have a variety of work training opportunities that sample type of work and level of support.

VII. PEER TUTORS

- _____ Peer tutors are on classroom schedule with designated daily assignments.
- _____ Peer tutors are used for instructing/monitoring students.
- _____ Peer tutors perform assignments competently.
- _____ Peer tutors interact with students in a friendly, respectful manner.

- * Peer tutors can work as effectively as special education professionals. Basics for successful tutoring include: (a) careful selection; (b) careful training; (c) challenging and valuable daily tasks assigned; (d) on-going monitoring and feedback. A good peer tutor program is evident when tutors: (a) follow the schedule and stay on task; (b) follow the lesson format correctly (as any classroom staff would); (c) interact with students appropriately (not as junior staff persons i.e. running sophisticated behavior management programs).

VIII. TRANSITION PLANNING

- _____ Teacher has contacted adult service agencies for all students 18-21 years of age.
- _____ Teacher conducts transition meeting to include team of parents/care providers, adult service agency representatives, students, and related personnel.
- _____ Transition team develops comprehensive plan addressing student's vocational, residential, financial, medical, and social needs after leaving school.

- * Schools have a critical role in helping students move from school to work and community life. Though schools will not be responsible for direct services, they must take an early leadership role in planning for appropriate services.

IX. Time in instruction

- _____ Teacher/staff is involved in instructing students at least 80% of each period.

- * Increasing time in instruction increases student learning. Look for ways to maximize time in instruction: transition should be not longer than the regular passing period (5 minutes or so). This means having materials ready. If you have 20 minutes to wait for the public bus, schedule that 20 minutes to practice parts of the upcoming activity. Expect most students to perform within the same time parameters as nonhandicapped students or community members (eliminate extended lunches, slow transitions, interruptions, bathroom trips).

Date: _____

Classroom: _____

Total points: _____ / 92 = _____ %

Total score should be 80 % or above.

Date:

Name:

COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

POINTS TO PONDER

Barbara Wilcox

Many thanks to Joan Melsheimer, Director of Special Education, Dubois-Spencer-Perry Cooperative, who suggested we put this together.

Points to Ponder

There are many events and decisions that take place in the life of any school building. They are decisions made by a principal or subject to his or her influence. Many represent the status quo, established school tradition, or define "the way we've always done things." They are decisions made almost reflexively by the school administration, often without thought about how they might influence the image of, or opportunities available to, students with severe handicaps.

If you are a principal committed to excellence in education for all students--including those with severe handicaps--ask yourself the following questions:

DO THE STUDENTS WITH SEVERE HANDICAPS WHO ATTEND THIS BUILDING...

. . . have assigned lockers? All students need personal space. It is probably best if all the "handicapped lockers" are not all together. Spread lockers around so students meet more regular student body members. For some students, having a locker with a key rather than a combination lock will make access much easier!

. . . have class assignments as freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and super-seniors? Isn't it funny that most students have a grade or class designation while students with severe handicaps are simply "special education"? Class assignments help create an identity and affiliation with others, and represent important status for students and their parents.

. . . have their individual pictures included in the year book or school annual? Too often we "forget" students in special education or include them as a group rather than representing them as the individuals they are.

. . . have assigned home rooms or guide periods that include students without disabilities? Students with severe disabilities don't have to be together all the

time. Home rooms present an easy, nonacademic opportunity for integration.

. . . participate in regular orientation and pre-registration programs? Like other new students, those with severe disabilities and their families can benefit from orientation events prior to the actual start of the school year.

. . . have assigned counselors? Like other high school students, students with severe disabilities and their parents will need the access to the resources of the counseling department. A single counselor may be assigned all students with special needs or all counselors may share advisory responsibilities.

. . . participate in extracurricular activities, including athletics? Extracurricular clubs and events are as important to students with disabilities as to their nonhandicapped peers. Not everyone must be a club president or varsity player; ordinary members and "student managers" are also important to the system.

. . . have a representative on the student council or governing board? Promoting "minority representation" in student government activities creates important learning opportunities both for students with disabilities and for their nonhandicapped peers.

. . . eat lunch with the rest of the student body? Students with severe disabilities need the opportunity to learn to cope with the realities of the lunch line. They should not be asked to come early or late, or to sit together as a group.

. . . have jobs within the school that are similar to jobs held by regular student body members? If it is "normal" for some students to work in the kitchen dishroom, it is quite appropriate for students with disabilities to have that same opportunity. Students with disabilities should not have in-school jobs that are stigmatizing or that would not be natural for regular student body members.

. . . attend all school assemblies and special events? Students with severe disabilities can attend pep assemblies and all-school events alongside their nonhandicapped peers. There is no need for them to sit as a group unless it is common practice for all students to have assigned seating.

. . . have access to all settings within the school? Students with severe disabilities should be able to use the library, locker rooms, home economics rooms,

vocational education classrooms, student lounge, school store, and computer labs, as well as their own "special" classrooms. They should have the opportunity to participate in elective courses such as art, physical education, home economics, wood-shop, horticulture, and other vocational education courses with personal support and curriculum modification as necessary. Students need not be assisted to the regular teacher's class roster; they can be assigned to the special education teacher but be assisted in the class by a peer tutor or a special education teaching assistant.

. . . participate in graduation ceremonies and social events? Graduation, the prom, and the senior dinner are important rites of passage for all students. With planning, participation in these events can be just as special for students with severe disabilities.

. . . participate in regular award ceremonies? If students with disabilities earn some special honor, acknowledge that accomplishment in the same sort of awards ceremony organized to reward other student athletes, scholars, artists, or humanitarians. "Retarded" ceremonies of any sort detract from the dignity of the accomplishment.

. . . do "normal" things in "normal" places? Students with severe disabilities should learn to do important adult activities in the settings where those activities actually take place. It is more normal and appropriate for girls to learn to use make-up in the restroom or locker room than to be taught at a table in their classroom. Personal hygiene training should occur in the locker room rather than in a classroom. Students can hang out in the student lounge, look at magazines in the school library, and learn to use tools in the shop class. There is no need to train real activities in the artificial environment of the classroom.

. . . use real life materials? Expect to see students with severe handicaps using real money and going real places. It's impossible to learn to deal with the complexity of work and community life within the confines of a classroom. School alone is not enough. Students . . . and their teachers . . . must go off-campus to where the action really is!

. . . follow the regular bell schedule? The schedules of students with severe handicaps should match those of the building as a whole.

There is no need for them to march to a different drummer.

. . . get the flyers, announcements, and newspapers that are distributed to regular education students? Students with severe disabilities and their families are probably as interested in district and school events as is any one else! Be sure they get all the regular mail the office distributes.

DOES YOUR SCHOOL HAVE A FORMAL PROGRAM FOR PEER TUTORS OR PEER ADVOCATES?

Tutors or advocates are critical to the social and educational integration of their peers with severe disabilities. They can provide both personal and instructional support. A formal tutor/advocate program provides the structure for interactions and the context for friendships, and promotes truly individualized learning opportunities. Experience tells us that tutor programs are most effective if they are set up as a graded course for elective or career credit.

DOES THE LIBRARY HAVE BOOKS THAT DEAL WITH DISABILITY ISSUES?

Check with your librarian to ensure that the media center contains both fiction and nonfiction materials that appropriately portray individuals with disabilities or deal with disability issues.

DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE INFORMATIONAL DISPLAYS IN THE LIBRARY OR SHOW CASES THAT PRESENT DISABILITY ISSUES OR THEMES?

Display cases can do more than show off trophies. They can help students learn about individual differences and human variability. The special education teacher can help create such a display!

ARE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES REPRESENTED IN SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS MATERIALS AND MEDIA?

After all, they are your students! A slide tape program or a school handbook can include pictures of students with disabilities along with descriptions of special education program activities. Be proud of having a program that promotes the value and dignity of all student body members.

ARE UNITS DEALING WITH DISABILITY INCLUDED IN REGULAR SUBJECT AREAS?

Disability is not a topic that belongs to special education alone, and information about disabilities can be easily presented in a variety of regular subject manner courses. For example: genetic factors associated with disabilities could be covered in biology. The impact of a child with a disability on the family could be addressed in a home economics/family life class. An English class could examine the presentation of folks with disabilities in literature and other media. An advanced computer class could investigate programs and devices to facilitate environmental control by people with physical disabilities. A history/civics course could deal with disability as a civil rights issue. Possibilities are endless.

DOES THE CLASS FOR STUDENTS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES HAVE A "NORMAL," NON-STIGMATIZING LABEL?

Think of how you refer to most teachers or classrooms in your building: Mr. Henderson, Ms. Jackson, Room 117. No need to call the special education teacher by first name only or to label the teacher or room as "severely handicapped." If the class needs a label, consider something such as "Basic Skills," "Life Skills," or "Community Skills."

DO YOU ACKNOWLEDGE COMMUNITY STORES AND SERVICES FOR THE IMPORTANT ROLE THEY PLAY IN PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATE EDUCATION TO STUDENTS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES?

Think about a "Community Appreciation Night" in the spring to acknowledge all those employers and store managers who have provided valuable training opportunities for students with severe disabilities.

DO REGULAR SUBJECT MATTER TEACHERS. . .

. . . have opportunities for inservice on topics related to students with severe disabilities? Teachers of regular students need to learn about the needs of special students: how some "talk" with a communication board; why some needs to take medication; why it is important to do part of a task even if completing the whole task is not feasible.

. . . share in supervision of all students as one of the regular school duties? Don't forget that regular teachers need to feel that they are responsible for all students! Consistently assigning the special teacher to

supervise special students denies the regular teacher an opportunity to get to know the strengths of a special student.

. . . have regular opportunities for positive contact with students with severe disabilities? Unless well planned, chances for developing positive experiences with students with handicaps can be lost in the fast pace of a regular school day. By making the scheduling of such contacts a high priority, regular teacher can become more accepting of perceived differences of students with disabilities.

DOES THE TEACHER OF THE SPECIAL CLASS. . .

. . . have regular school duties and assignments? Go ahead, assign school duties to him or her just as you would any other teacher! (If you have enough staff to go around, however, you might consider that these teachers, indeed, have a large set of responsibilities!)

. . . eat with other faculty members? If students are to realize the full benefits of integration, it is important that their teacher, too, be integrated! Encourage special education teacher to be part of the faculty.

. . . attend regular school faculty meetings? Special education teachers are not so special that they can be excused from meetings.

. . . have comparable prep time? As for any teacher, it is important for teachers of students with severe disabilities to have preparation time during the day. Though you may schedule the prep period for other staff, the teacher of students with severe handicaps will have to schedule his or her own time based on the overall classroom schedule. Prep time may be used to meet with regular subject matter teachers, develop work training opportunities, complete calls to parents, or other program support tasks. Prep time is not "free time."

IS THE CLASSROOM ITSELF IN A GOOD LOCATION?

A "good" location is not next to the exit and the bathroom. Rather, a good location is a room that is centrally located and visible to students and faculty alike.

DOES THE CLASSROOM LOOK LIKE A HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM?

Image is important! Make sure that the classroom for students with severe handicaps looks like other classrooms. Calendars, decorations, and bulletin

board items should be age-appropriate; that is, similar to those in "regular" classes. Furniture should be similar to that in other rooms as well. Cutaway tables characteristic of elementary rooms, rocking chairs, pianos, sofas, and overstuffed chairs are not normal in high school rooms! Though students with severe handicaps may need adaptive equipment, every effort should be made to arrange furniture and store equipment to create as normal an appearance as possible.

DO PARENTS OF STUDENTS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES PARTICIPATE IN THE PTA?

Encourage their participation or representation! After all, they do have a vested interest in what goes on in the building.

ARE PARENTS OF STUDENTS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES INVITED/ ENCOURAGED TO VOLUNTEER FOR SCHOOL FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES?

Don't forget that parents need to be recognized as valuable and contributing member of the school and community. Call on them to help "man" the booths, call for campaigns, or be chaperones at school functions. They can be your best ally!

PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT

Change is always difficult. Overcoming the inertia of the status quo takes both a commitment to improvement and a clear vision of what the "improved" program will look like.

We have defined seven accomplishments that we think should characterize a program that is, indeed, effective in preparing students with severe disabilities to be productive, participating members of society. These outcomes are listed below:

1. Students are integrated in school and community
2. IEPs are developed and monitored
3. Effective instruction is designed and delivered
4. Students are prepared for, and placed into supported employment during their last year in school
5. Classroom tasks and resources are managed effectively
6. Consumers are satisfied with program procedures and student outcomes
7. Administrative procedures are in place to support program practices

For each outcome, we have defined elements that, in effect, further define the accomplishment. This definition of an effective program can guide your own planning.

Carefully review each element on the following Discrepancy Analysis and Task List with the classroom staff. Honestly report the current status, noting partial fulfillment and successful implementation as well as features with potential for improvement. A detailed report is more useful than a simple +/- scoring. Go ahead and identify needed action to bring your operation in line with each element of an effective program.

After reviewing all elements and identifying needed action, complete the remaining two columns. WHO identifies the individuals responsible for needed action. WHEN can target a specific completion date or establish the priority (1st, 2nd, 3rd order) of each item.

It is a good idea for each member of the planning group to have a copy of the final plan.

Use the plan to generate professional development goals for the teacher and classroom staff.

DISCREPANCY ANALYSIS AND TASK LIST

1.0 STUDENTS INTEGRATED IN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

ELEMENT	STATUS	NEEDED ACTION	WHO	WHEN
1.1 Classrooms in central location and a "regular" room on school campus.				
1.2 Classrooms distributed if more than 1 per building.				
1.3 Formal peer tutor program established.				
1.4 Students can access all specialized environments in school (home economics, library, etc).				
1.5 Students can access regular classes with instructional support and curriculum modification as necessary.				
1.6 Extracurricular club established to foster out-of-school/after school integration.				
1.7 Community-based training provided for activities included on IEP.				
1.8 Students visible in school media.				
1.9 Classroom or program standards established for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated contacts during school day (e.g. at least 3 opportunities on student's schedule) - After school social integration (e.g. participation in at least 1 regular extracurricular activity per term) - Time in community training (e.g. at least 33% of the instructional week scheduled out of school). 				

DISCREPANCY ANALYSIS AND TASK LIST

2.0 IEPs DEVELOPED AND MONITORED

ELEMENT	STATUS	NEEDED ACTION	WHO	WHEN
2.1 Functional, activity-based curriculum approach adopted (Activities Catalog, ecological inventory approach, or something similar).				
2.2 Student assessment procedures address quality of life.				
2.3 IEP meetings follow negotiation format and actively involve parents in decision making process.				
2.4 IEP goals target activities (not skills), and specify what students will be able to do after training (e.g. range of competence, adaptations, limits of performance).				
2.5 IEPs are comprehensive (target activities across work, leisure, and personal management domains) and integrate expertise of therapists in activity goals (no separate therapy goals).				
2.6 IEPs for all students are completed in the spring.				
2.7 Goals for each student are rank ordered.				
2.8 System is established to track follow-up tasks.				
2.9 Adult service providers invited to IEPs of high school students.				
2.10 Formal transition plans completed for students above target age.				

DISCREPANCY ANALYSIS AND TASK LIST

3.0 EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION DESIGNED AND DELIVERED

ELEMENT	STATUS	NEEDED ACTION	WHO	WHEN
<p>3.1 Written instructional program for all active goals on a student's IEP include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generic activity analysis - Sequence of training examples to promote generalization (general case programming) - System for data collection and data summary. 				
<p>3.2 In-school simulations are designed to support community competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevant stimuli - Actual response topography. 				
<p>3.3 Guidelines are established for changing intervention based on student performance data.</p>				
<p>3.4 Instructional procedures enhance student choice and control (lots of self-monitoring).</p>				
<p>3.5 Noncertified staff are observed in training, and feedback is provided to improve instructional delivery.</p>				
<p>3.6 Alternate performance strategies are often used as necessary.</p>				
<p>3.7 Appropriate procedures followed for behavior management program.</p>				
<p>3.8 Standards established and monitored for tracking staff time in instruction.</p>				

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DISCREPANCY ANALYSIS AND TASK LIST

4.6 STUDENTS PREPARED FOR AND PLACED INTO SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

ELEMENT	STATUS	NEEDED ACTION	WHO	WHEN
4.1 All students have out-of-school work training opportunities.				
4.2 Work training opportunities sample locally relevant job clusters.				
4.3 Work training provided in a variety of formats (1:1, crew, enclave).				
4.4 Students sample job clusters and training formats over their high school careers.				
4.5 Students have resumes that are updated annually (for internal tracking and for public consumption).				
4.6 Procedures are established to recruit and reinforce work training sites.				
4.7 Training follows job analysis that addresses employer standards for speed and quality.				
4.8 Students placed in supported employment during final year of school.				
4.9 Transition Manual for parents describes post-school service system and consumer outcomes in local programs.				

DISCREPANCY ANALYSIS AND TASK LIST

3.0 CLASSROOM TASKS AND RESOURCES MANAGED

ELEMENT	STATUS	NEEDED ACTION	WHO	WHEN
<p>3.1 Classroom schedule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Follows building bell schedule b. Includes only activities from student IEPs c. Specifies who does what, when, where, and with whom d. Is publicly posted. <p>3.2 Master calendar (or similar task list system) is used to track staff tasks.</p> <p>3.3 Meetings of classroom staff are conducted at least every two weeks (to review master calendar tasks and other classroom standards), and minutes kept regarding decisions.</p> <p>3.4 Standards are established and procedures developed to monitor critical elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instructional time (suggested: 80% of scheduled time) - Staff tasks (suggested: 80% of assigned). <p>3.5 Peer tutors recruited, trained, and monitored. (suggested: 2-3 tutors per period; formal observation at least monthly)</p>				

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DISCREPANCY ANALYSIS AND TASK LIST

6.0 CONSUMERS SATISFIED WITH PROGRAM PROCEDURES AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

ELEMENT	STATUS	NEEDED ACTION	WHO	WHEN
6.1 Parents oriented to changes in program philosophy, curriculum, and practice.				
6.2 Bi-weekly contact with family scheduled and completed (phone calls, visits, notes).				
6.3 Employer satisfaction data collected each term.				
6.4 Building staff informed about program goals and procedures.				
6.5 Program results reported annually.				

DISCREPANCY ANALYSIS AND TASK LIST

7.0 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO SUPPORT BEST PRACTICE PROCEDURES

ELEMENT	STATUS	NEEDED ACTION	WHO	WHEN
<p>7.1 Program purpose statement defines goals of schooling for students with severe handicaps.</p> <p>7.2 Program guidelines/procedures support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age-appropriate placements - Assignment to program classroom as close to home school as possible (support for heterogeneous grouping) - Distribution of classrooms across available campuses - Preference for central rather than isolated building. <p>7.3 Staff job descriptions that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Differentiate roles for elementary and secondary staff - Define roles for related service personnel that emphasize consultation, transdisciplinary teaming, and community training. <p>7.4 Guidelines available regarding transportation alternative.</p> <p>7.5 Policies for staff and student liability for out-of-school training.</p> <p>7.6 Procedures exist to cover non-traditional expenses.</p>				

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DISCREPANCY ANALYSIS AND TASK LIST

7.0 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO SUPPORT BEST PRACTICE PROCEDURES

ELEMENT	STATUS	NEEDED ACTION	WHO	WHEN
<p>7.7 Data system in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor classroom status on these elements - Follow-up school leavers/graduates - Report post-school needs to policy planners. <p>7.8 Teacher supervision occurs regularly and emphasises status on these program elements.</p> <p>7.9 LEA sponsors annual inservice for parents that focusses on transition (rules, regulations, services available, supported employment, etc.).</p> <p>7.10 Transition Planning Committee is established.</p>				

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COMMON QUESTIONS...AND SOME ANSWERS

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN
INTEGRATED COMMUNITY-BASED MODEL

The implementation of a community-based model in any secondary classroom for students with severe handicaps will represent a departure from the status quo, and consequently requires both descriptions of, and justification for, procedural changes. Our experience implementing such a model in a variety of communities makes it clear that there is a common set of questions. We have tried to address these concerns in a question/answer format. Being familiar with these questions will help you advocate effectively and answer similar questions when they are raised in your own school community.

Q: Is community-based training an appropriate undertaking? Is the idea itself credible?

A: Recent initiatives from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, highlight that the goals of education and related services are to prepare students with disabilities to be productive, participating members of society, and to live as independently as possible. In order to achieve this outcome, schools will have to restructure the curriculum and training provided while students are in high school.

The importance of training students with severe handicaps in the community rather than in a traditional classroom program is emphasized in current professional literature across the nation.

In addition, many programs across the country provide on-going demonstrations that community training is both feasible and successful. Communities well known for their community-based programs include: Madison, Wisconsin; San Francisco, California; Eugene, Oregon; DeKalb and Champaign-Urbana, Illinois.

High school programs for students with severe handicaps throughout Oregon attend regular school campuses; their training emphasizes learning work, leisure, and personal management activities in the community. Both Utah and Washington State have adapted the Oregon High School model to effect broad systems change. The Kentucky Department of Education has published state guidelines that emphasize functional, community-based programming. Indian school districts in Indiana, Colorado, Arizona, Tennessee, and many other states are also committed to providing excellent community-based training.

The real question is not whether to implement community training but how soon you can begin!

Q: Does a community-based training program create added risk and liability for a district?

A: Given the low trainer-to-student ratio used in community training, the risk of accidents is minimized. However, each district should review its policies to ensure that adequate liability insurance is available for staff and students. If a district policy covers regular high school students for work experience or distributive education programs, it is unlikely that it will have to expand its insurance to cover students with disabilities. Since any peer tutors involved in community training will be enrolled in a class, they too should be covered by the regular district policy.

A number of features create program safeguards: (1) having on file an LEA purpose statement addressing community-based training, (2) having parents sign an acknowledgement that their son/daughter will be trained in the community, (3) having written procedures for dealing with medical and/or non-medical emergencies outside school, (4) having a posted classroom schedule that indicates who will be trained where and when, (5) ensuring that all community activity focuses directly on student IEP goals, (6) collecting data on student performance, and (7) documenting that staff have received training on procedures for community-based teaching.

Q: Aren't severely handicapped students too vulnerable to access the community by themselves?

A: There are several responses to the notion that persons with handicaps are more vulnerable to community risk: (1) A person with severe handicaps is only vulnerable if she/he is not adequately trained. Low student:teacher ratios, task analysis, student performance data, and well-trained teachers ensure adequate training. The ability of students to learn adaptive community behaviors is well documented. (2) The "dignity of risk" (Perske, 1972) is an important aspect of learning for everyone. Students with handicaps have the right not to be overly protected, and hence restricted, from the opportunity for community integration. The key is supervised training so that risk is minimized. Citizens with disabilities, like everyone else, have the right to realistic feedback from others.

Q: Is the community-based model for all students?

A: Yes. If the goal of education is to have graduates who are competent in the community and future environments, all students should have the opportunity to participate in the model. Students need to learn activities that will have an impact on their lives. All students should be given the opportunity to learn to participate to the greatest degree in all relevant activities. Participation will enhance the person's image and appeal.

Q: Can individuals with severe handicaps actually learn to use community stores and services? Isn't it unrealistic to think of them participating in community activities?

A: Students with severe handicaps may learn more slowly or need to employ prosthetic devices or alternative performance strategies to successfully function in the community. It is likely that lack of skill is due to lack of training and access, not lack of ability. Perhaps the best way to deal with this concern is to provide real examples which demonstrate the success of the model in sites where students are as similar as possible to those with whom you are proposing the model. A direct observation of a successful project site is probably most effective. In addition, the presentation of direct or indirect testimony of parents and professionals who are already experiencing success with the model can be highly effective. The presentation of research demonstrating the achievements of individuals with severe handicaps can also be used to demonstrate the appropriateness of these expectations for students.

Q: Aren't students with severe handicaps too slow and "low functioning" to be out in the community? Won't their presence annoy other citizens?

A: This question has a multifaceted response: (1) Many individuals--the elderly, individuals with crutches or limbs in casts--may also respond more slowly. Society is generally tolerant of them.

(2) An individual with a handicap may complete tasks slowly or inappropriately due to a lack of training or exposure; therefore, better training over time will eliminate the "annoyance" to other citizens.

(3) Individuals with handicaps are members of the local community and have the same claim to services and opportunities as anyone else. Personal inconvenience for "normal citizens" is an excuse, not a justification, for segregation or exclusion.

(4) Prejudice against a minority group is reduced by exposure to its members; this provides a compelling argument for integration in the schools and in the community. Successfully trained citizens with handicaps are their own best advocates.

Q: Does the emphasis on community training mean that academic skills will no longer be taught?

A: Training of academic skills will not be abandoned, but those skills will be taught in context rather than in isolation. Reading, math, or communication skills will be taught in the context of valued activities such as shopping, cooking, or riding the bus. Treatment of academic skills is influenced by the concept of "opportunity cost": Given limited instructional time and many activities that could be taught, it is important to spend educational time in those areas that will

maximize success after leaving school. For a student with a severe handicapping condition, it is considerably more important to learn community and job skills than to learn more math facts, adjectives, or sight words.

Q: Will a community-based classroom be more expensive to operate than a traditional secondary classroom?

A: No; the community-based model has been designed to fit whatever resources are available to the classroom. However, those resources may have to be used in a different way. Rather than expenditures for purchases of commercial curriculum materials, teachers will need support for local curriculum development activities. Instead of traditional classroom supplies (workbooks, prepackaged materials), classrooms will need flexibility to purchase consumable supplies (cooking ingredients, restaurant meals) and other nontraditional items (bus tokens, etc.). Parents can be expected to provide at least partial support for some community-based activities that benefit families directly (such as shopping for grocery items), and for those activities that parents usually support (e.g., student leisure activities).

Q: Will the community-based model be more time consuming for a teacher than a traditional classroom-based model for severely handicapped secondary students?

A: By definition, any change in the status quo will require some additional energy and effort. Most of the elements of the model represent activities that should be part of any good classroom program (IEPs, contact with families, written instructional programs, data-based decision making, staff training, and program accountability).

The particular procedures advocated by the Oregon High School Model (OHS), Utah's Community-Based Transition Model, and the Employment Training and Transition Model represent a coherent and compatible set of systems that provide known outcomes for students. A study of how teachers in OHS classrooms allocate their time across various tasks (e.g., direct instruction, recruiting and training peer tutors, instructional program development, district and building meetings) and how much total time they spent showed that both the amount and pattern of activity changed over the school year. Initially teachers in project classrooms worked an average of 10.00 hours per day in project classrooms. By the end of the school year, this figure had dropped to an average of 8.00 hours per day including a duty-free lunch period. Further, the pattern of the data shows that there were fluctuations associated with events in the school year (e.g., more instructional program development in the fall, more contact with parents and time in meetings in the spring as a function of IEPs).

While start-up of the community-based model will require additional time, maintaining the model should not be anymore

demanding than operating a good traditional program. However, since we do not have comparable data from classroom-based programs, it is impossible to compare teacher effort across community-based and classroom-based models.

Q: Will the community-based model require additional staff or specialists (vocational trainers, community trainers, classroom aides, etc.)?

A: The community-based model typically has been implemented with the staff already available to the classroom and without the addition of staff resources beyond those normally available to similar classes in the district. Some modifications in traditional job description duties for existing classroom staff, related service staff and supervisory staff may be necessary to implement the model. Additional paid staff positions should not be necessary.

Q: What is the role of related service staff (occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech/language specialist, adaptive physical education specialist) in a community-based model?

A: OT, PT, speech and language specialists are consultants to the teacher and may assist in the following ways: evaluating current levels of student performance; giving input on IEPs and suggesting activities; developing prosthetic devices; training students on activity goals from the IEP; and monitoring effective communication/motor skills in community settings. The adaptive physical education specialist may function as a consultant or provide instruction on age-appropriate recreation and leisure skills in the school and/or community.

Related service staff coordinate goal development, assessment, effective classroom management and procedures, and instruction with the teacher, aide, and other support staff.

Q: What are the benefits of implementing a community-based model to the students with severe handicaps in the participating classroom?

A: Students will achieve greater independence both at home and in the community following graduation. They will receive training in work and in self-management skills (making choices, problem-solving, time management), and have an increased ability to use leisure time appropriately.

In addition, students will benefit from state-of-the-art teaching technology and increased instructional time, from increased contact with nonhandicapped peers, and from a functional curriculum focused on the requirements of adulthood.

Data indicate that improvements in students' lifestyles also take place following model implementation. After following students in classrooms over a year, the data show a

significant increase in student performance of activities in integrated community settings outside school hours. Students in classrooms are spending more time in community settings engaged in leisure activities, personal management tasks (such as shopping), and work as a result of their participation in the model. In other words, a community-based program does impact a student's quality of life outside the school day.

Q: What are the benefits of implementing of a community-based model to the participating teacher?

A: To implement a community-based model effectively, a teacher will have to learn organizational skills (schedules, master calendar, weekly task lists, classroom meetings); learn data analysis skills (to monitor instructional time and staff tasks, in addition to student progress); improve his or her supervisory skills; and improve his or her public relations skills (excellent training for later supervisory or administrative positions!). The teacher will have access to new information and professional development opportunities; learn to use low cost, effective classroom management procedures; utilize materials developed by other classrooms; and participate in a network of other professionals committed to excellence in programs for students with severe handicaps.

Q: What are the benefits of implementing a community-based model to the building principal?

A: The administration is able to improve services within the budget, to demonstrate an exemplary and visible program that is compatible with the regular high school, and to receive credit and publicity for an excellent program.

Q: What are the benefits of implementation of a community-based model to the participating parents?

A: Parents are able to give planning and program-evaluation assistance, to receive specific outcome information on their son's/daughter's progress, to coordinate home and school/community programs with the teacher, to see increased independence of their son or daughter, to participate in transition planning, and to enjoy involvement in goal setting.

Q: Don't some components of the community-based model actually duplicate the responsibilities of adult service programs? Can't some of this wait until after graduation?

A: The community-based model does include some components that are (or should be) provided by adult service agencies. However, many adult service agencies are not familiar with the service needs of students with severe handicaps and find it difficult to respond with adequate services. The goal of the high school program is to provide information about students to the representatives of these agencies that would allow them to do better planning. The process of transition requires early

involvement of all participants (school, parents, students, and adult service agencies) in the future planning for an individual student. All potential service providers need to work together before, not after, high school completion.

OF COURSE . . .

The most effective answer to any question regarding the implementation of community-based model is direct exposure to individuals already involved with the model. Visits to ongoing sites should be encouraged at any time. In addition, a slide/tape presentation of one successful community-based model (the Oregon High School model) is available from the National LRE Network.

SOME LIGHT READING . . .

YOU CAN'T WIN

The school principal, like all other educators, should expect to please no one. All too often he is caught on the horns of a dilemma regardless of the action he takes, or fails to take.

If he corrects a teacher, he's always picking on someone; if she doesn't correct teachers, she's a weak administrator.

If she calls a meeting, she has no regard for teachers' time; if he doesn't call meetings, he doesn't believe in democratic administration.

If he makes quick decisions and follows up, he is an autocrat; if she is slow in making a decision, she is indecisive.

If she visits the classroom, she is being nosey; if he doesn't visit the classroom, he doesn't care what is going on.

If he speaks up for some new program, he's on the bandwagon; if she's cautious about change, she's living in the past.

If she suspends a student, she doesn't understand children; if he doesn't, he's a weak disciplinarian.

If he reports to school early, he has insomnia; if she leaves school late, she is a slow worker.

If she attends community affairs, she's a politician; if he doesn't, he has poor public relations.

When he attends conferences of principals, he's goofing off; when she doesn't, she's unprofessional.

If she checks with the superintendent, she hasn't a mind of her own; if he seldom checks, he's assuming too much authority.

If he's young, he's got to learn; if she's old, she just doesn't have it anymore.

If she has a friendly personality, she's a show off; if he's quiet, he is antisocial.

But take heart. Keep giving your best; for no matter what you do, there are those who will always say, "It isn't the school that's to blame. It's the PRINCIPAL of the thing."



OREGON ASSOCIATION OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS



OREGON ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION

710 12th Street S.E. - Salem, Oregon 97301

A SPECIAL MEMO

One of the most complex of the new educational challenges that has confronted school administrators in recent years is that which is involved in the identification and treatment of students with special handicaps. We are all familiar with 94-142 and its rules.

The following reflects what Don Essig, a high school principal, feels about the special education service opportunity which was presented to him. It occurs to us that what he felt and learned would be of interest and value to both elementary and secondary principals.

GEORGE MARTIN
Staff Assistant

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"The following article is one that I prepared for publication because of some deep feelings that I have developed in the past three years about the inclusion of severely handicapped students in high school. Until the class was included at North Eugene, I was probably like most Americans, unaware of the real needs and wants of this element of our society. Believe me, I have been taught well by the students and staff of that program, that they can contribute to and participate in society as worthy members.

"This article is being shared with you in hopes that all of you might have a part of the information necessary to understand what severely handicapped students can do for a high school student body and staff. Truly, the 1,000 regular people at North Eugene have gained much more than the 14 severely handicapped people from their presence here. I hope that someday all of you will have the same opportunity to have a similar group in your school, and that this article might make it easier for you to see the benefits of such a program."

Warmly,
/s/ Don
Don S. Essig

April 1983

"Hey, Barb, Where's the Severely Handicapped Room?"

by

Don M. Essig, Principal
North Eugene High School¹

Since the mid-70's public schools in Oregon began to serve severely handicapped students on their campuses, most often within a self-contained classroom model run by a special education teacher. There have been some recent reports on the impact of such integration from the perspectives of the special educator, and handicapped and regular education students. However, relatively little attention has been focused on the impact of integration in the high school or its implication for the building principal. The purpose of this article is to present a principal's perspective on some of the issues related to the integration of severely handicapped students in a secondary school.

Since 1980, North Eugene High School has had a self-contained classroom for severely handicapped students. The classroom is run and monitored by teaching and supervisory staff of the Lane Educational Service District. This year there are fourteen students in the class. Generally speaking, having the "Basic Skills" class has been a valuable experience for all of us at North Eugene. The class is an integral part of our school.

A commitment to provide severely handicapped students integrated educational experiences means more than simply making

¹Dr. Essig is now Director of Management Services, Eugene School District 4-J.

classroom space available. There are various levels of integration, and the principal can play an important facilitating role in each.

At the most basic level is physical integration. This refers simply to the location of the special program in the school building with regular education programs. While this appears to be a straight forward issue of space allocation, there are some additional factors that influence the success of physical integration. In initially deciding what space to assign the Basic Skills classroom, the attempt was made to make the location convenient for the students and chose a room both close to the exit where the school buses stop and near the restrooms. After one term, however, the classroom was moved to a more central location in the school. In the new location, regular student traffic is always very heavy, and cafeteria and student lounge are nearby. Students from the Basic Skills class are literally in the center of things at NEHS and have many more opportunities for natural contacts with their non-handicapped peers in the course of the school day.

Functional integration describes situations where severely handicapped students and their nonhandicapped peers simultaneously use the school facilities and resources. The severely handicapped students at NEHS use virtually all the facilities in the school at the times when they are in use by the rest of the school population. They have lockers, make purchases at the snack bar and school store, attend assemblies, and "hang out" in the cafeteria just like the rest of the student body. There were no special adaptations or arrangements, just the

initial expectation that NEHS was the home school for these students, not just a building that provided space.

In addition to access to all the school's facilities, some students in the Basic Skills class participate with support in classes offered in the regular curriculum. We have had Basic Skills students in woodshop, home economics, weight training, and slimmastics classes.

Social integration refers to regular personal interactions between handicapped and nonhandicapped students. While the location of the classroom at NEHS is ideal for encouraging contacts between the students, location alone does not ensure social integration. One effective vehicle to increase interpersonal integration at NEHS has been an active peer tutor program. Each term there is an elective class for students who wish to be peer tutors. Enrollment in the class is limited and competition to be a peer tutor is quite keen. Students receive grades in the peer tutor class. A number of student leaders have been recruited into the program which helps the status of the Basic Skills students. Peer tutors provide small group instruction in the classroom, participate in community training, and are evaluated on a regular basis as well as graded at the end of the term. Besides being a valuable learning experience for the nonhandicapped students, the peer tutor program provides an important support network for the integration of the handicapped students. The handicapped student now can greet other students by name when going down the hall and has more opportunities to socialize with nonhandicapped peers. In addition to supporting a

peer tutor program, the principal can also increase opportunities for contact by expecting and encouraging the attendance of special education students in school assemblies and special school functions. It has also been important to integrate the Basic Skills teacher into the rest of the school staff even though he is technically an ESD rather than district employee. At NEHS this has resulted in that teacher feeling a part of the staff, and helping him to be able to communicate his program to them.

Another strategy for providing more opportunities for interaction is the participation of handicapped students in regular classes. Those situations where nonhandicapped peers can witness the handicapped students as a competent peer seem especially valuable.

In addition to providing overall support for integration activities, the principal must serve as one of the role models for social interaction between handicapped and nonhandicapped individuals. He must make a point of initiating appropriate social exchanges with the handicapped students while trying not to treat them differently from the rest. That implies similar behavior expectations for them as for regular students. The goal of high school for regular students is to prepare them to function effectively after graduation whether they begin employment or go on for further education. In effect, the goal for severely handicapped students is the same: successful community functioning, or societal integration.

If the function of the school is to prepare severely handicapped students to live, work, and recreate in normal

community settings, the secondary curriculum must reflect that goal. Consequently much of the teaching with severely handicapped students must occur outside the classroom, in work experience settings, on bus routes, in supermarkets, and in local recreation centers. It is quite possible, even likely, to step into the Basic Skills classroom at NEHS and find the majority of students off campus. This was initially quite a novel experience for staff and required some adjustment of what people thought of as a good education for high school students. It also required some exceptions to established school rules that were not made with the instructional needs of severely handicapped students in mind. In order for the Basic Skills students to get the functional, community training they needed, the principal must assume the same supervisory functions for them as for the other students. For example, if the teacher and aide were both in the community, the principal and staff assume responsibility for those students who remain on campus working with peer tutors.

In summary, there is much to be gained on a high school campus by having a severely handicapped class of students as part of the program. Regular staff and students learn to interact effectively with this segment of the population who are not as fortunate as most. Handicapped students have the opportunity to learn and grow among a caring, understanding, regular population. The principal should do everything necessary to exploit the positive aspects of that relationship.

An Opportunity, Not a Burden

DON M. ESSIG

Severely handicapped students integrated into a regular high school in Eugene, Oregon, have the support and acceptance of school staff, students, and community.





"[Nonhandicapped students] gain praise—not ridicule—from other students when they attend afterschool activities with their handicapped friends."

In March 1979, a group of staff members representing the new Oregon High School project proposed that I, as principal, participate in their project, a movement I knew little about—a program for which I myself had to be trained. After weeks of discussions with staff members, and after careful planning with the teacher of the proposed basic skills class for severely handicapped students, I was convinced, and the "1300/13 theory" was conceived: the 1300 regular students and staff members in the school could learn and benefit from the 13 handicapped students as much as they could learn from us. These students would be considered an opportunity, not a burden.

The High School Setting

Our model requires an "open" school—not a physically open plant without walls, but a community of

people who are willing to listen, test, and help cultivate change. The North Eugene building is perhaps as traditional a structure as one will find anywhere in the country; it was built in the late 1950s to satisfy taxpayers who had reacted negatively to a previous high school that many considered too lavish. Even so, we discovered that with minor modifications the special students managed very well.

We strongly believe that handicapped students should be visible to everyone. Their classroom should be close to the social hub of the building as well as to lockers, cafeteria, and regular bus loading areas to reduce their mobility problems and maximize their interactions with regular students and staff members. A central location also makes it more convenient for handicapped students to participate in activities that regular stu-

dents and staff members take for granted, such as going to the lunchroom, using lockers, and attending assemblies. The handicapped students' break and lunch schedules should be the same as for other students, maximizing their visibility and availability to the total school population.

Support Activities

Extracurricular activities are an important part of high school life. At North Eugene, severely handicapped students participate in these activities through a club called the "Highlander Advocates." Membership includes students from many social classes within the school—student leaders, athletes, punks, honor society members, and so on. The club helps sponsor dances, buys buttons and banners to show school support, and serves as a focal

support group for the severely handicapped by all students. The handicapped students also carry student identification cards and have their pictures in the yearbook—not as a special, handicapped class, but as individual students.

Without doubt, the most important aspect of our success has been the training, development, and utilization of peer tutors. Regular and handi-

capped students work alongside one another on computers and in home economics or industrial education labs, they rollerskate, bowl, and play softball together. Tutors accompany their severely handicapped peers to banks, fast-food restaurants, and grocery stores; and they gain praise—not ridicule—from other students when they attend afterschool activities with their handicapped friends.

The Oregon High School Model for Severely Handicapped Students²

Program components were designed from previous research and various techniques used in educating severely handicapped students. The model is based on the assumption that severely handicapped students can perform a variety of tasks once presumed beyond their capabilities, and has seven basic features:

1. The *integration* of severely handicapped students involves placement of a special class in a regular high school building where there is an opportunity to share resources and nonacademic experiences with nonhandicapped peers. Integration is defined as availability to the regular education environment rather than mainstreaming handicapped students into classes with regular students.

2. The program should be *age appropriate*, and instruction should incorporate materials and tasks that highlight similarities within the high school peer group. This includes the commitment to provide extracurricular and nonacademic experiences normally associated with regular high school students.

3. The program is *community referenced* with emphasis on functional skills and criteria that relate to the community's demands and expectations.

4. A *future orientation* is a natural and necessary complement to community referencing. Future environments should include increased accessibility, community living alternatives, more opportunities for nontrivial work and wages, and a decreased need for adult day-care programs.

5. The *comprehensive* high school program should be judged not against what teachers can program, but against what their students need. Strategies are developed for fitting into the local economy and for teaching skills that are not normally practical in the classroom.

6. *Parent involvement* encompasses a wide variety of roles. Having parents extensively involved in the development of individualized educational programs, homebound instruction, community training, data collection, and program design leads to the potential for a higher success rate once students leave school.

7. The *effectiveness* of secondary instruction should be measured in terms of daily performance in residential, vocational, leisure, and community environments rather than by accumulated knowledge or classroom behavior. Program assessment must be sensitive to increased independence in daily routines, improved access to community services, development of personal options, employment, and productivity.

Life Skills

Learning skills in a realistic setting is especially important for handicapped students. The school can provide work training opportunities (cafeteria clean-up, litter patrol, recycling projects). The small salaries students earn from these jobs provide them with the chance to learn how to cash checks, deposit savings, and make purchases.

The growing business/school partnership programs around the country present possibilities for additional training in real-life skills. Local business leaders must be convinced that severely handicapped students can be a productive, successful work force, and programs such as ours can help the community to better understand these students, their needs, and their often-underestimated abilities.

During the past six years, seven of the students in our program have graduated and been awarded certificates of completion. Three of these students are presently employed in the community, and the other four are seeking jobs.

Those Who Care

As educators, those who should care the most about children and their futures, we must convince others of the need to help all students—including the severely handicapped—become successful members of society. The staff members and students at North Eugene High School have demonstrated that this is possible.

Don M. Essig served as principal of North Eugene High School from 1978–1984. He is presently Director, Management Development and Services, School District 4J, Eugene Public Schools, 200 N. Monroe, Eugene, Oregon 97402.

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Second Front

LAPORTE HERALD-ARGUS, Friday, October 3, 1986

Revised special ed program offers 'life skills' to area students

By TODD DICKARD
Staff writer

Local educators and others around Indiana are refining their approach to teaching severely handicapped children how to function in society.

Six Indiana special education cooperatives, including the one that serves LaPorte County, are changing curriculum to teach severely handicapped students "life skills," and they are working to place students in community and school jobs.

The curriculum changes are a result of a state Department of Public Instruction program entitled Least Restrictive Environment. The South LaPorte County Special Education Cooperative, along with cooperatives from Jasper, Richmond, Hammond, Warsaw and Terre Haute, were chosen to take part in the program.

The program "is in response to a national movement within the field of special education: Students with severe handicaps can become more independent, productive members of our society," local cooperative director Susan Calkins said.

Special education teachers told the LaPorte School Board last month that cooking, transportation, hygiene and recreation skills are just as important to the severely handicapped as reading, math and other academic skills.

Members of the Parent Advisory Council were told of the program at its first regular meeting Wednesday night. The council consists mostly of parents of handicapped children.

"We hope we are going to teach (severely handicapped kids) how to be independent after graduation," said Calkins.

One way to make severely handicapped students more independent is to place them in jobs. And LaPorte High School special education teacher Carol Schultz is working to do just that.

She has placed several handicapped students in high school and middle school jobs and she plans to find six senior handicapped students work with employers in the community later this fall.

More than 40 severely handicapped students ranging in age from five to 19 attend the county's special education cooperative which serves all public schools in the county except for Michigan City's.

This spring the cooperative formed a committee comprised of special education teachers, principals and a psychologist to direct the Least Restrictive Environment program here.

Calkins said the committee established a three-year implementation plan for the program, a new "state-of-the-

art curriculum," and an inservice program so special education teachers can practice and learn new teaching techniques. Committee members have also participated in two state-funded conferences on the program.

Calkins said the curriculum changes will, among other things, help handicapped students learn how to use transportation services, use money, and prepare meals.

For example, she said, students could be taken to the bowling alley, where they would select their own bowling shoes and bowling ball, and also pay for them. Calkins said severely handicapped LaPorteans might be taught to use TransPorte or learn how to cross a street safely.

She said severely handicapped students will do much of their learning outside of the classroom.

The program will allow handicapped students to get away from "watered-down" academics and learn how to live, Calkins said, even though math, reading, writing and other academic skills will still be stressed.



CALKINS

New MCCSC program opening doors for special students

By Annysa Corcoran
H-T Report

In many ways, Shelly Hackett is a typical high school student.

She struggles with her classes and holds down a part-time job. She went to the prom and she proudly flashes her newly acquired high school ring to anyone who admires it.

A year ago, Shelly's mother, Elaine Pryor, never would have believed her daughter's life could be so "normal." Shelly, after all, was born 17 years ago with Down's syndrome.

Pryor credits her daughter's most recent progress to an effort by the Monroe County Community School Corp. to integrate its mentally and physically handicapped students into the regular school setting.

In the Least Restrictive Environment Project, moderately, severely and profoundly mentally retarded young people, many of whom also are impaired by serious physical handicaps, are in segregated classes at Bloomington High School North and Rogers and Binford elementary schools, according to project director Ed Sontag, who is on sabbatical from a high-ranking position in the

federal Department of Education.

Based at the Developmental Training Center at Indiana University's School of Education, Sontag was coordinating the project for three other districts when he learned last May that MCCSC intended to transfer the remainder of its severely retarded students from the Stone Belt Council for Retarded Citizens school to classrooms at the district's schools. That's when he invited MCCSC to participate in the project along with school corporations in Johnson County, Indianapolis and South Bend.

MCCSC began mainstreaming its



Staff photo by Annysa Corcoran

Shelly Hackett uses a city bus to get to work

handicapped youngsters four years ago. But it was not until this fall that the most severe students were brought from Stone Belt, and that vocational education was stressed. With emphasis in community and vocational training, the Least Restrictive Environment Project is designed to prepare these students for independent living.

"At one time, these people, once they became adults, would have been destined to a lifetime of TV watching or some type of activity in a sheltered workshop," said Sontag. "The goal in a program like this is to place them in competitive jobs."

At both the elementary and secondary levels, students spend some portion of the day in the classroom working on academics. But the curriculum is functional. For example, rather than working on abstract algebra equations, students in a math class might figure out how much money they need to ride the bus downtown, eat breakfast in a restaurant and return to school. The words on a spelling quiz might be items on a grocery shopping list. In addition to classroom work, students are taken out into the community and taught skills, such as riding the bus, crossing the street

or how to conduct themselves in a department store.

"You can talk all day about how to find the right bus, about paying the fare and getting off at the right stop. But it's by getting out and doing it that these kids learn," said Mary Mariowe, one of the four full-time teachers at Bloomington High School North.

For Shelly, who lives in rural Poland, learning to cross the street on the way from the bus station to her job, was a major accomplishment, said Mariowe.

see MCCSC, Back page

New program opening doors for special students

At the high school, students also are trained in vocational skills and in job-hunting techniques, such as filling out an application.

Marlowe spends half of her time scouting out employers for the students. If necessary, she spends the first week on the job helping the student make the transition. Currently, 18 of the young people hold jobs at various sites around the city, from washing dishes at Bandido's to operating a complicated printing machine and collating unit at the IU chemistry department.

Two days a week, Shelly cleans the office at the American Heart Association. She dusts the window sills and furniture, vacuums and cleans out the women's restroom.

"They don't let her clean the toilet," said Marlowe. "They said they didn't think she should have to do that."

The parents of the students were alarmed when MCCSC officials first announced their intention to mainstream their children into the schools, and there was some talk about taking legal action to stop the move.

Parents were concerned that their children could be not only physically harmed in the community, but emotionally devastated by cruel teasing from the so-called normal students.

"We were very upset," said Pryor, remembering how she and her husband, Robert, reacted to the MCCSC decision. "It was difficult for us because all the years Shelly's been in school, she's been protected."

So far, neither the physical nor the emotional well-being of the students has been compromised. In fact, Sontag and MCCSC administrators and staff are boasting unqualified success.

At a state hearing on least restrictive environment earlier this month, MCCSC superintendent Harmon Baldwin said, "You see, Monroe County does not speak out of a fear of what might happen. Monroe County can speak out of

what has happened."

It is not just the handicapped students who have benefited from the project. "From our standpoint, it's a two-way street," said Sandy Cole, chairman of the special education department at BHS North. "We've been able to integrate these handicapped students into a more age-appropriate environment. But the benefits of that have been positive for the regular students as well. They're learning how to deal with the differences in people. They're learning as much as the handicapped students."

Through a peer tutor program, juniors and seniors interview for positions that have them working with the handicapped students. The goodwill generated by such a program and the relationships it helps to foster are translated into a better acceptance of the handicapped student in the school and in the community.

Because of the way the Least Restrictive Environment Project is funded, it is not likely to collapse once Sontag and the federal and state departments of education withdraw later this year. Sontag's salary has been paid by the office of special education and rehabilitative services at the federal level, and the state department of education is picking up the bill for training teachers. However, the local school corporations are covering supplies, paying teachers' salaries and pro-

viding them released time for in-service training.

On Tuesday, Sontag's boss in Washington, assistant secretary of special education and rehabilitative services Madeline Will, will be in town to evaluate the project.

After meeting with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dean Evans and Indianapolis Public Schools Superintendent Jim Adams in the morning, Will is expected to visit the MCCSC printing plant, where a student in the program works. At a 2:30 p.m. news conference, she will report her observations of the project and the Least Restrictive Environment agenda for the nation.

In attempting to gauge the project's success, a single call to Elaine Pryor would be as valuable to Will as an entire day of meetings with educators and high-powered officials.

"We are really pleased," said Pryor. "We're just sorry that she hadn't had more training like this. It's a more normal environment for her. She's proud of her school. She just went to the prom..."

"Since she was a little girl, we've been concerned about her future and what she'll do as an adult," said Pryor. "Who knows, maybe she will work in a sheltered workshop. But at least in this program, she'll have more options."

"The more things she encounters the better prepared she'll be for the things that come up in her life."

Community-based school program reaps benefits for students, elderly

By Betty Trelebach
Bloomington High School North

On Wednesday afternoons, students from one of the moderate and severely handicapped classes at Bloomington High School North can be found volunteering for the residents at Hospitality House Nursing Home. Last winter, Hospitality House activities director Georgia Schaich put out a request for volunteers through the Bloomington Volunteer Action Bureau. The nursing home needed people to shop for residents who did not have anyone to shop for them. Since BHS North has a community-based curriculum for their moderate and severely handicapped students, Hospitality House's needs were in line with experiences that these students required.

This community-based curriculum for moderate and severely handicapped students was first implemented during the 1985-86 school year. The term community-based means that the students spend up to one-half of their school week engaging in activities that take place in the community. The activities include meaningful work at various business sites; domestic cleaning; shopping for home, personal and school supplies; bowling;



MCCSC community update

taking advantage of the facilities at the YMCA; eating breakfast or lunch in a restaurant of their choice; cashing a check at a local bank; mailing a card to a friend, etc. The intent of this type of curriculum is to provide opportunities for the students to learn about their community and to be able to access their community with confidence. After these particular students graduate, it is felt that they will become productive adults in their community.

The students who shop for Hospitality House go with a school system staff member to Ms. Schaich's office. She has already asked the residents what they need that week at the store. She provides us with an individual list from each person who needs something along with the money to purchase the items. The items range from Blueberry Newtons, pimento cheese, chewing tobacco, lightweight sweaters and

pizza, to a particular size of thread for tatting. The students learn to access 8-10 different stores during the course of their shopping trips. They learn how to look for a particular brand, make price comparisons, money usage, and the logistics of shopping in general. The students, in turn, offer a much needed service for other people who cannot do this for themselves.

Last spring, the students got the opportunity to meet the residents for whom they shop. The class was invited to the annual volunteer recognition dinner at Hospitality House. The students and staff attended the dinner and were recognized as valuable volunteers of the nursing home. The students were very pleased with this recognition. This fall the students and staff have received volunteer pins that state that they have volunteered for Hospitality House between one and 25 hours during 1986.

This type of cooperation between Bloomington High School North and Hospitality House has enhanced the quality of life for both the students and the residents. It has shown among other things that moderate and severely handicapped people can be contributing members of their community.

Handicapped get help from their Special Pals

A volunteer hand during school day

By **BARB ALBERT**
STAR STAFF WRITER

Bruce Chaney and Jeremy Carnahan eat lunch together at school, play with He-Man toys and listen to records during recess.

Not so unique for two friends. But their relationship is more than that.

Jeremy pushes Bruce, a quadriplegic confined to a wheelchair, through the halls of

★ More education-related stories on Page 24

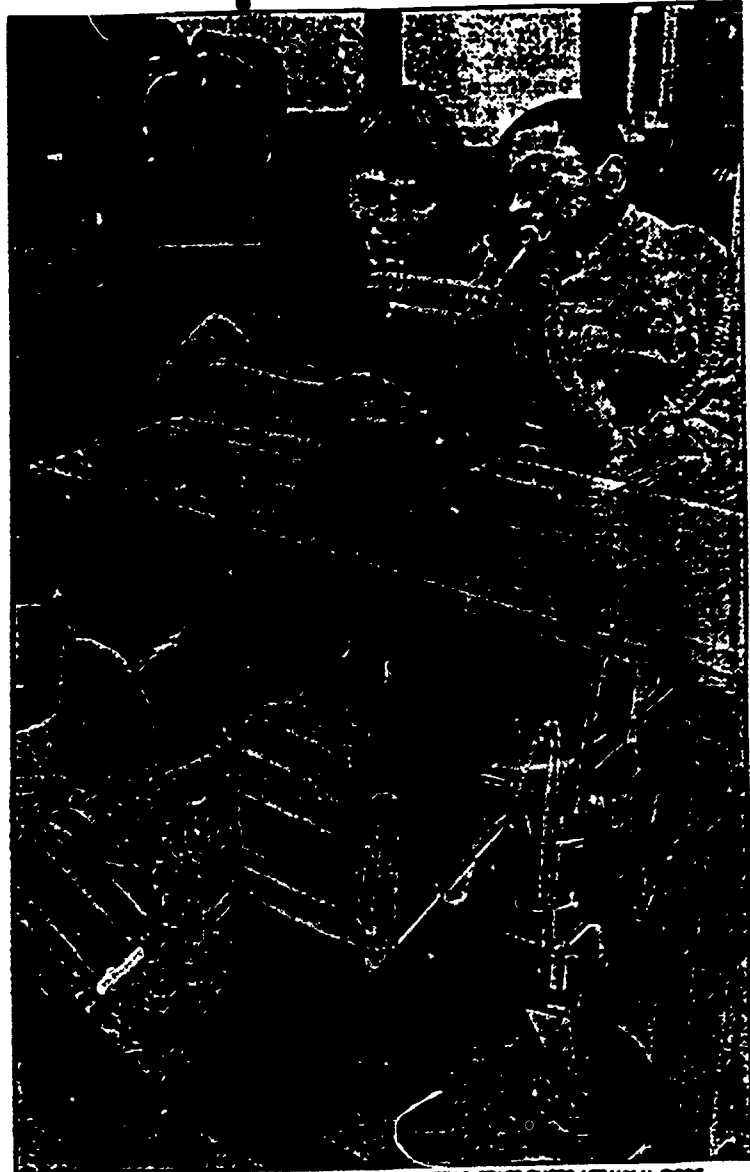
School 94. The 12-year-old also gets Bruce's lunch tray every day, helps him get into a special bus after school, and most importantly, just spends time with a boy who often hadn't been around other pupils.

Jeremy is Bruce's "special pal" at the far-Eastside elementary school, 2701 Devon Avenue, where many handicapped children are paired with other pupils to give them a helping hand during the day.

Forty-four physically and/or mentally handicapped pupils are attending the school for the first time this year. Indianapolis Public Schools moved handicapped pupils attending Roberts School to 10 schools throughout the district this school year to integrate them into a regular school setting.

Bruce, 11, was hit by a car when he was 3 years old, resulting in almost total paralysis from the shoulders down. He cannot breathe on his own, so he has to use a ventilator attached to his wheelchair. And he can only talk in whispers because of a tracheostomy operation.

"I've learned that whenever I'm around these kids," Jeremy said Thursday during recess, "it makes me feel special — like I'm doing something for them. It makes me happy."



STAR STAFF PHOTO / FRANK H. PESSE

Jeremy Carnahan (left) helps "special pal" Bruce Chaney operate an educational toy.

Many of the other handicapped children at School 94, and throughout the 10 schools, also have been paired with "special pals." Teachers say the handicapped pupils and the others both benefit.

"They've become very attached to each other," said Marlane Rockefeller, a sixth-grade teacher. "They love those (handicapped) kids. They have become protective of them."

The pupils are learning how to deal with people with handicaps, and also they are more conscious of the name-calling

they do among themselves, said Beth A. Mackey, who teaches multiple-handicapped pupils.

The pal system evolved through the initiatives of the pupils last fall.

Miss Rockefeller said she noticed some of her sixth-graders coming to class late. When she investigated, she found they were pushing the handicapped children in wheelchairs back to their rooms first.

Since then, fourth- to sixth-graders have volunteered to take

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on specific responsibilities for certain children. Those in the lower grades have adopted a class of handicapped children, sometimes meeting for special parties or helping the more severely handicapped pupils in their classes.

"Kids are coming to my class and asking me, 'Can I help? Can I help?'" explained Ms. Mackey. "It's more socially accepted to help them than to make fun of them."

She said the children are interacting, not just playing. They help feed the handicapped pupils and help develop their fine motor skills.

In accordance with federal and state law, IPS is following the concept of placing handicapped students in the "least restrictive environment." Mildly handicapped students have been

placed in regular classrooms for years, but more emphasis is now being given to putting the moderately to severely handicapped students in regular classes.

Rather than attend classes with only handicapped pupils all day, some of them attend art, music and physical education, as well as some academic subjects, with the other students, according to Principal William Malone.

"We've just had no problems. . . . It's been a learning experience for all of us," he said.

For Bruce, who has either been taught at home or in a school for handicapped pupils, "getting him into a classroom is probably the best thing we could do for him," said Mary Evans, a nurse who accompanies him to school.

"I can see a lot of growth socially," she said. "He can carry on a conversation and can relate to others much better."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION. . .

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

We know that principals are busy people, so we have tried to keep the message short and to the point. However, if you have the time or inclination, there is much more information on designing effective schools for students with severe disabilities. The following references should help get you started.

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SPI

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